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DILEMMAS

OF

A CHURCHMAN,

ARISING FROM

THE DISCORDANT DOCTRINE

AND

Political Practices

OF THE

CLERGY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT.

BY

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LONDON:

JAMES RIDGWAY AND SONS, 169, PICCADILLY.

MDCCCXXXVIII.

DILEMMAS OF A CHURCHMAN,

&c. &c.

When the late excellent Bishop Heber arrived in Calcutta, on his appointment to that See, one of the Company's chaplains called on the Writer of the following sheets, and, seizing him by the hand, exclaimed in an exulting tone, "Rejoice, rejoice, he is one of us." This gratulation at the time was perfectly unintelligible to the person to whom it was addressed, though of course it was received with that equivocal acquiescence which in such cases it is courteous to assume. The fact was, as subsequently discovered, the chaplain was Evangelical; he concluded Bishop Heber to be Evangelical; and he was pleased to class me among the Evangelicals. Some years afterwards, a Baptist teacher, remarking on the part I had taken at home in defence of liberty of conscience, expressed very strong surprise, because, when in India, I appeared to him to be an extremely high-churchman, while of late, certain persons who have taken the trouble to characterise so humble an individual, have pronounced me to be half a Dissenter. Now, nothing

will excuse this egotistical reference but the fact, that millions of Churchmen would be subject to the same contradictory representations, being brought up, as is most probably the case, in the same ignorance of doctrinal varieties, discouraged in early life from the pursuit of theological enquiry, long habituated to deride sanctity under the generic term of Methodism, carelessly adopting Christianity from the teaching of the Prayer-book, and discovering at length, with shame, astonishment, and regret that they have reached a mature age, hebetated with prejudice, deceived by spiritual pride, and in utter blindness as to the vital distinctions of religious truth.

This distressing condition is produced by the injudicious system which prevails in almost every department of education connected with the Establishment; that of making a young person take it for granted that he must, without investigation, belong to that section of the Church to which his parents profess, or are supposed to adhere. Up to the age of fourteen or fifteen, he needs not trouble himself about responsibility in these matters, as his sponsors* must

* Sponsors have a difficult duty to perform, when assuming the trust prescribed to them by the ministration of baptism of Infants. In the first place, they have to believe the infant both guilty and immaculate. One of the prayers implores that the infant may receive remission of his *sins* by spiritual regeneration, and after quoting the only passage in Scripture, which seems immediately to sanction the rite, the minister cites the authority of our Saviour

look to that until confirmation, and the Bishop's imposition of hands place the trust in his own keeping. Is it fair to treat a youth in such a forestalling manner, and to tie his faculties down in the ductile season of early life to one set of opinions, to conceal every form of religious truth but one from his view, and obstinately to nurture him in partial and exclusive notions? It is not asserted that children should learn to lisp theology; but why should not young persons in the dawn of

himself for the "innocency" of children. While stumbling at this dilemma, (if it has occurred to them,) they are called upon to believe the child regenerated by the ceremonial, and engage for his performing that which human power can neither enforce nor secure. Sponsors understand, however, that their responsibility is quite conventional. Indeed, how can it be otherwise? The great object with prudent and worldly parents is to procure eligible (i.e. opulent or influential) sponsors, and it matters nothing whether the young Christian ever sees his godfather again, provided the latter remembers him in his will. In fact, the parents effect what the sponsors undertake to fulfil, and except, possibly, on certain family reunions which afford an opportunity of liberality, the office is a sinecure. In fashionable life, more especially, the interference of a sponsor in order to ascertain the religious education of his godson, would be resented as an affront; and yet, to require this, nothing is more grave than his obligation. Youths at school, persons expecting to remain in distant countries for many years, are frequently invited to lend their names as sponsors; even the Sovereign sometimes deigns to officiate vicariously, yet it is folly to expect a literal fulfilment of his engagements. Persons in after life have often repented the rashness with which, in earlier days, they have treated as a form what is undeniably a duty; and the utter disregard of it too often manifests how a solemn contract is entered into without reflection, and neglected without compunction.

their intelligence, have explained to them those varieties of doctrine which divide the Christian Church, and the scriptural evidence upon which their belief ought to rest? It is most probable, however, that the knowledge imparted is confined to an almost mechanical recapitulation of the Church Catechism, and the communication of the elementary principles of moral obligation. One of the earliest objects of instruction is to concentrate the pupil's scriptural knowledge in a compact formula, which, by an unscrupulous practice, continued on the part of the Clergy from generation to generation, is palmed upon the ignorant, not only as the creed, but as the composition of t e Apostles.* This, with inculcated indiscrimination, he repeats as a child by rote and at random under domestic guidance, confounding it with the solemn offices of prayer. This, as a youth, when transferred to Eton or some other public school, he gabbles at church, laying aside for the moment his nuts or his novel, (quæque ipsa miserrima vidi,) following the manœuvre of the fugleman in the reading-desk, and wheeling round

* It would be a work of supererogation to give more than one out of the numerous proofs of this wilful propagation of error. Bishop Horsley (who knew better) begins his 20th sermon thus:—"In the first rudiments of our christian faith comprised in the Apostles' Creed, which we are made to get by heart in our earliest infancy we are taught," &c.; and throughout the discourse he proceeds on the same illusion.

to the East with the surpliced band of choristers, like a disciple of Zoroaster.*—And why? because he has been required to believe the high-church dogma, that the East is the favourite residence of Him "who answereth out of the whirlwind:" the High and Lofty One, who inhabiteth eternity, "whom the heavens, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain." Oxford, perhaps, opens to him her matriculating arms, on his subscribing to the Thirty-nine Articles, which he neither understands nor cares about, fearless of his tremendous responsibility, because, even if he should feel a momentary flush at the virtual commission of perjury, his conscience is soothed by the undulating

* See Ezekiel viii. 16, 17.—"And he brought me into the inner court of the Lord's House, and behold, at the door of the Temple of the Lord, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the Lord, and their faces toward the east, and they worshipped the Sun toward the East.

"Then he said unto me, Hast thou seen *this*, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah, that they commit the abominations which they commit here," &c.

After a few lines of explanation, the Rev. Thomas Scott remarks on these verses:—"We cannot doubt that the practice of turning to the East, in some parts of public worship, which is still retained in many Christian churches, was originally borrowed from idolaters, who worshipped the Sun; and though it is possible for us to be *superstitiously* afraid of superstition, respecting any indifferent posture or ceremony, yet those who are very tenacious of this custom, would do well to consider its original, in order to abate their excessive attachment to it."

wings of the vampire* casuists, who affirm that the sin may be obviated by means of cathedral glosses and subsequent alleviating interpretation.

His old prejudices are thus strengthened and confirmed; the shield of the Thirty-nine Articles protects him from collision with Dissenters; there is no fear of his orthodoxy being disturbed by a challenge to prove its worth; and he enters upon the active duties of the world without any sufficient inquiry as to the momentous question, on what religious principles he is to fulfil them; satisfied to be an hereditary member of the Established Church, "in which," according to the favourite phrase of electioneering gratitude, "he was born, and *therefore* (the best reason he has to give), he hopes to die."†

* The bat is represented as sucking the blood of its sleeping victim, while it soothes him into sounder repose by the fanning of his wings. And thus the youthful conscience is lulled by the anodyne suggestion that the engagement is only a declaration of contingent construction.

"The bare subscription made by boys of this early age is simply tantamount to a declaration that the subscribers belong to the Church of England of which these are the Articles, and accept them as true on that authority."—Bishop of Exeter's speech on the Cambridge Petition against the Dissenters.—Hansard's Debates, vol. xxii. p. 998.

† Two young gentlemen travelling in a public conveyance, loudly proclaimed that they were High churchmen, but that they did not believe in the Trinity! If any one had told these orthodox theologians that they were Pædobaptists, they would probably have disclaimed the appellation as an imputation of Dissent.

That this is the sentiment and predicament of vast numbers of individuals claiming communion with the Established Church, is, I apprehend, undeniable. Generally speaking, its ranks are filled not by those who enter them from conviction, but who are enlisted by birth, by prescription, by convenience, by interest; or who are enrolled by society in the conforming mass, by virtue of their carelessness or undisguised ignorance. Among the Protestant Peers there is not one avowed Dissenter: the great bulk of the untitled and affluent Aristocracy are affiliated to the Established Church. The theatres and race courses own few besides Episcopalians; Crockford's is orthodox, and Almack's Athanasian. Indeed it is indispensable that the Church should include all those who do not avowedly dissent from, but are simply ignorant of, its doctrines; all the men, women, and children in the rural districts, who never see the Bible, all the myriads of the Metropolis, whose conduct manifests that they contemn it. Otherwise how could it prove that immense majority claimed for it in the last session of Parliament by a Noble Lord, who averred that the Protestant Dissenters did not exceed one million? It might be offensive further to specify these conscientious adherents, but it is no violation of charity or experience to predicate, that among the lower classes of the people* designated

* The Quarterly Review, vol. 15. p. 233, quotes the authority of Sir Thomas Bernard, that two-thirds of the lower order of people

as Churchmen, a great proportion cannot distinguish Moses from Judas Iscariot.

The Dissenters are constrained to act differently. As the faculties of their children begin to expand, these soon discern that there is something peculiar in their situation. The orthodox urchin educated in the National School treads on his toes, and abuses the young dissident because he cannot *explain* like himself, that a sacrament is "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace." The Baptist boy, the poverty of whose parents perhaps compels them to send him to the Parish Sunday School, is puzzled by being ordered by the Clergyman, who is insisting on the value of truth, to declare the services of his God-fathers and God-mothers whom he knows he does not possess, and the efficacy of that baptism which he

in London, live as utterly ignorant of the doctrines and duties of Christianity, and are as errant and unconverted pagans, as if they had existed in the wildest part of Africa. And the Reviewer stated the case to be the same in all our large towns.

The following story has been related as a representation founded on fact, of the lamentable indistinctness of ideas which too often prevails in humble life with respect to futurity. A physician, after taking leave of a poor man who was in extremity, heard the patient say to his wife, that as the doctor had given him over, he wished to know if he could do any thing for her in heaven. After some natural expressions of grief, the wife replied that she wanted nothing, except perhaps that he would give her love to her first husband.—"La, Sally," exclaimed the dying man, in the peevishness of exhaustion, "how can you expect me in my weak and helpless state, to go *lumbering* about heaven to look for your first husband."

has never received. The young member of the Establishment never asks why he goes to Church; the son of the Dissenter inquires why he does *not* go to Church. He is informed in reply, that his parents conscientiously differ from the doctrines preached there, though the emoluments and privileges connected with it are immense, and contumely and inferiority attach to non-conformity; that they are compelled to contribute to the support of the edifice and ministrations of that Church from which their convictions are abhorrent, whose Articles and Canons pronounce them to be excommunicate, and whose rules exclude them from reposing after death in the same burying-ground with their friends or relations of that communion, except when interred according to the forms of an objectionable though sublime ceremonial. The disadvantages of the alternative are not concealed from the youth; and he is told, if he follow the religion of his forefathers, he must, in rejecting the Establishment, submit in most instances to much worldly mortification. Filial affection and natural prepossessions no doubt have their influence, yet it is obvious that the instructor cannot escape from pointing out to his pupil the difficulties of that resolution which he is invited to adopt. The hereditary Churchman, it has been observed, is put to no similar test, and the usual attractions of his station are sufficient to fix him to the creed of his ancestors;

and if he be a second son, and there is a good living in the family, he will probably be moved to go into holy orders. The Dissenter also may undertake the care of souls "in an irregular manner," but he has no "great prizes" to look to. He must be content with the modicum* derived from voluntary contribution, and whatever may be the eminence of his talents and merits, he may be designated by the Bishop of the diocese as a "person,"† if he venture to give as his opinion what Clergy-

* Hence the meek and learned author of the Scripture testimony to the Messiah, is content with the annual voluntary contribution of £170. from the affection of his flock, and envies not the opulence derived by the members of the Establishment from compulsory assessment.

† This signification of high episcopal contempt and many harder words, fell on the head of the eloquent and undaunted minister of the Weigh House Chapel, in consequence of an expression which though grossly misrepresented, does not exceed in boldness the declarations found in the productions of sundry members of the Established Church of England and Scotland. See a pamphlet entituled "What and who says it;" remarkable, presuming its quotations to be faithful, for its lucid arrangement, successful induction, and impregnable truth. Mr. Binney, however, was not perfectly passive under a chastisement of such mortifying intention, as appears from the appendix to a discourse published by him in the year 1835, with the title of Dissent not Schism. "He told Maister Bradford, that he had made the Bishop of London afraide: for, saith he laughingly, his chapleine gave him counsell not to strike me with his crosier staffe, for that I would strike again; and by my troth, said he, rubbing his handes, I made him believe I would do so indeed."—Fox, Acts and Mon. of Dr. R. Taylor.

men of the Establishment have broadly asserted to be fact. When, however, a churchman by descent, unshackled by professional vows, brought up in the common and sinful indifference above adverted to, opens his eyes on the awfulness of his situation; when he enquires whether he is taking the right course, whether he can justify the preference by which he is actuated, whether he be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh a reason of the hope that is in him; when he discovers that the ritual which he has unhesitatingly followed, is full of obnoxious error, which, though admitted to be such by conscientious clergymen themselves, the majority of that body conspire to retain; when he perceives that the ministers of his adopted system are divided as to doctrine involving results of unspeakable importance, yet combined to oppose every attempt to apply a remedy to its imperfection, banded together to hail and encourage unchristian calumnies, foremost to oppugn the decrees of the Legislature, preaching uncharitableness from the pulpit, and yelling it forth at convivial meetings, contributing among the earliest to suppress the freedom of election;* when he observes the inconsistencies and defects of those ministers, he pauses, affrighted in his headlong credulity, and acknowledges that he is encompassed with *dilemmas.*

* It has been intimated in the House of Commons that no less than 1150 Protestant Clergymen subscribed their names in aid of this conspiracy against the freedom of election.

Lord Chatham affirmed, "We have a Calvinistic creed, a Popish liturgy, and an Arminian clergy." Out of these discordant materials of the Establishment have branched forth two adverse sects of ministers, ordinarily distinguished as Orthodox Churchmen and Evangelicals; and furious have been their polemical animosities. The late Lord Liverpool, we are told,* prompted by such prelates as declared that the people have nothing to do with the laws but to obey them, withheld preferment on principle from the Evangelical clergy, whom he considered to be doing great mischief in the community; and the Evangelical party on the other hand have complained that the Gospel was not preached by their opponents, whose preaching, it has been broadly declared, "leads their hearers down to the chambers of death." The Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge has been arraigned, convicted, and threatened with dissolution, though there is reason to believe that, as a step towards reconciling these religious differences, the High-church zealots consented to exclude some merely amusing narratives from the list of their devotional tracts.† Notwithstanding this sacrifice of principle, however, the contest con-

* Letters of A Quiet Looker-on.

† Episcopal errors are not so easily obliterated. "A tract by Dr. Gray, Bishop of Bristol, entitled 'A Dialogue between a Churchman and a Methodist,' is so grossly inaccurate, that its expulsion has been moved for at Bartlett's Buildings; I fear, without success." —What, and Who says it, p. 4.

tinued to rage with unabated rancour, until the imminence of Church Reform, which both sides viewed with instinctive antipathy, forced upon them the necessity of an armistice to avert the common evil. A truce ensued. Hooker and Jewel were laid aside for the Times and John Bull; and in their rabid pursuit of politics, both parties with but few individual exceptions, merged their differences in an apparent oblivion of social and professional subordination. The proofs of such unscrupulous conduct on the part of almost all classes in the Church, under the rank of an Archbishop, which will now be adduced, will sufficiently account for the "dilemmas" in which any member of the Establishment who takes the trouble to trace these facts, so difficult to reconcile with known principles of duty, is too likely to be entangled.

The Bishop of Exeter led the way. At his triennial visitation in 1836, he dissected and vilified to his Clergy certain Acts of Parliament, and certain proceedings of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners which had incurred his disapprobation. His Lordship characterized the New Marriage Act as "a degrading and corrupting law;" and he insinuated, that no "honest women will avail themselves of it," and that "Englishmen will spurn" it. The Bishop asserts the Act to contain provisions wholly unnecessary for the attainment of its professed objects, and pregnant or seemingly pregnant with the most disastrous consequences to the

Church of England, as an Established Church. He characterizes one of the earliest Acts of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, among whom are the two Archbishops, his superiors, with "a proneness to extend their own powers, a mischievous latitude and laxity in construing the terms in which their trust is confided to them; a violation, in short, of both the letter and spirit of the Commission under which they act." After these apostolical expressions, the Bishop, with great humility, "hopes he has not spoken offensively," leaving us to guess whether a charge of this description is calculated to fortify our attachment to the Established Church, when we see one of its prelates perverting the high station which he holds, by criticising, *ex cathedrâ*, whence religious counsel alone should proceed, the Acts of the Parliament and of his superiors? For be it remembered, that the statutes which he condemns received the assent of one who was not only his Sovereign, but his acknowledged spiritual head, so that he offended both politically and ecclesiastically; and his two archiepiscopal superiors, to one at least of whom he swore, at his ordination, to render all due reverence and obedience, are members of that Commission which he brands as mischievous, and labours to depreciate in the eyes of his own clergy.*

What a contrast does the respectful and affecting

* In an equal spirit of decorum the Bishop of Rochester has addressed a charge to his Clergy which abounds in expressions cal-

remonstrance of the Clergy and the Bishop of Sodor and Man exhibit to the spirit displayed in almost every page of the Bishop of Exeter's Charge! Such moderation is calculated at least to conciliate our sympathy, though our judgments may be opposed to the concession solicited. These sentiments of respect, however, cease to operate when we advert to some of the memorials from the Deans and Chapters appealing against the diversion of their patronage, the insolent language of which betokens the high professional example by which their audacity is encouraged. The Dean and Chapter of Bristol display a most solicitous dread of the diminution of the devotional feelings of the Choral Vicars in consequence of the reduction of their number, and they anticipate wit shuddering, certain "nepotic and corrupt appointments, which it will be difficult to restrain." They fear lest the influence of the Bishops should be unduly augmented. They gently and indirectly advert to the inadequate inducements which the love of their Saviour and a proper sense of the inestimable responsibility of a Christian Minister present, when they see "that in an Establishment including many thousand Clergy, the retention of only 100 places of honour affords, *humanly speaking*, (cautious qualification!)

culated to excite obstruction to recent enactments of the Legislature, and to estrange all moderate Churchmen from an hierarchical Establishment in which faction is now rife, and arrogance rampant.

too little encouragement to the devotion of talent and attainment to the service of the Ministry!" Only 100 great prizes! Alas! poor Church!— The recapitulation of these grievances awakens their conscience too, and they discover rather late, as determined advocates of the Union of Church and State, that when they receive a *congé d'elire*, they are obliged to elect that individual for their Bishop, whom the Minister of the day may dictate to their choice. It is admitted that this is a hardship; but, in the mouths of uncompromising upholders of the alliance between Church and State, the complaint savours somewhat of inconsistency. The Dean and Chapter close this decent representation with a threat, that if the good things of the Church be withdrawn, Canons and Prebendaries are likely to quit it, and turn Dissenters. "We would, moreover, solemnly represent our anxious fears, that if some measures be not now devised to satisfy the reasonable and pious wishes entertained on this last head, the Church will have to deplore, at no distant period, either the subjection of some of her most faithful presbyters to the sufferings of persecution, *or what will be worse, their secession from her Communion!*" Further, if the Dean and Chapter of Bristol are afraid of the Bishops robbing them of their patronage, the minor Canons of the same Cathedral cherish an equal distrust of the Dean and Chapter. One of the minor Canons entertained a well-founded

hope, that he should obtain a certain benefice, but, on his applying on the present occasion for the rectory now vacant, it has been made known to him, that it is the intention of the Chapter to give it to a friend or relative of one of the Prebendaries!

Penetrated with deep respect for the Commissioners, the Dean and Chapter of Durham submit, that the proposed changes must go far to destroy the influence and usefulness of Cathedral Establishments. The Dean, however, though consenting to the Memorial, desires to keep himself unfettered as a Peer of Parliament, it being possible that he may expostulate one way as a Dean, and dictate in another as a Baronial Bishop.

The Chapter of Ely are not so anxious for the protracted company of their Dean, as the Commissioners might imagine: they beg leave to observe, that the measure for remodelling the Cathedral Churches is subversive of ancient rights, and "being actuated by a sincere desire to discharge their duty toward their own body, and to promote the best interests of religion,"—they suggest that the patronage of the Chapter may be left in their own keeping. It seems from the statutes quoted, that those religious monarchs, Henry VIII., Elizabeth, and Charles II., were particularly interested in the *pinguescence* of the Church of Ely, as appears from the eighteenth chapter of that code. "Alienationem vel impignerationem alicujus manerii,

terræ, reditus, tenementorum, aut alicujus rei immobilis omnino prohibemus, *pinguescere* enim optamus ecclesiam nostram, non macrescere." Much twaddle in the shape of expostulation follows, to which the Commissioners will, of course, pay due attention, not overlooking the truly Christian warning, "that even the labours of the parochial ministry would be diminished in value and effect, if deprived of the countenance and support, animation and guidance, which they have long derived from the studies fostered by the religious retirement of the Cathedral Churches." Whether the Parochial Clergy will confirm this intimation, that they will not do their duty to God and their consciences, except stimulated by the prospect of enjoying sloth in a Cathedral stall, remains to be proved.

The Dean and Chapter of Norwich, adopting the style *coupé*, at once pronounce that the carrying into effect the recommendations of the Church Commissioners would be an act of direct spoliation, not only unjust, but ill-timed and inexpedient, a dangerous example to rash and unprincipled men, who may not scruple in aftertimes to appeal to it as a justification of still greater inroads on the rights of Ecclesiastical property, and perhaps also of a selfish appropriation, under the sanction of the law, of the corporate funds of our ancient institutions."*

* The Parliamentary papers from which the above quotations are extracted, contain an individual memorandum of the Dean of Nor-

The Memorial of the Dean and Prebendaries of Winchester is remarkable for the unblushing eulogy of Church sinecures; they not only laud existing sinecures, but say, "if they did not at present exist, we should hold it to be one of the first duties of those in public authority to create them;" and in this unscriptural opinion they cite Dr. Chalmers as a coadjutor.

The above extracts will give a general idea of the tone which pervades the Memorials of the Chapters. Very few are devoid of expressions bordering on disrespect to the authorities which they address; but it will be observed, that some of the Memorialists indulge in language calculated to make the meeker disciples of Episcopacy wonder, and to aggravate the doubts of the waverers. The Dean and Chapter of Lincoln, for instance, after anticipating the sarcastic exultation of the enemies of the Church of England at the disreputable

wich, recommending sundry innovations. It suggests that "a Dean and three, or even two, Prebendaries, and two minor Canons would be sufficient to carry on the duty respectably, provided the practice of chaunting the whole service be relinquished." Enumerating eight choral and eight lay members, he states, that the former do not fulfil the intentions of the founder, and proposes that the practice of singing the prayers, that relic of Popery, should be abolished in the Cathedral; he hints a hope that Deans and Chapters would add a Sermon to the Sunday afternoon's service; protests against any additional duty to Deans and Prebendaries, because it would interfere with their holding other preferment; and suggests that the Dean should not, as at present, receive less than a fifth of the income of a Bishop.

struggle of its Dignitaries for patronage and profit, observe: "It is lamentable to see any of her natural guardians aiding to strip her of her grandeur, sweeping away one integral part of her constitution, by the annihilation of one amongst her highest ranks of Ministers, and utterly dissolving her minor Corporations, coæval and intimately connected with the venerable foundations and imposing dignity of her Episcopal Sees. And we deprecate this RECKLESS CONTEMPT" (on the part of the two Archbishops, be it remembered) " for the institutions, provisions, and appointments of the early benefactors of our Church: we cannot conceal from ourselves the unhappy truth, that, in those high places whence formerly proceeded pious endowments, and jealous defences of the external majesty of religion, there appears to be now an unseemly consultation how much of her apparel can be stripped off, instead of the primitive pride of rendering her more glorious to behold; a disposition to abandon those bulwarks which have been set up to give strength and honour to episcopacy, instead of intrepid zeal in their defence." Alluding to the " many dangerous innovations" recommended by the Commissioners, they broadly state, that the startling propositions of the Commissioners " are regarded as paving the way for further spoliation of the Church, and as precedents for disturbing all that has hitherto been considered sacred and secure."

"Fifty-two dignitaries, or nearly so, abstracted at once ('fell swoop') from our magnificent foundation, we cannot but contemplate as AN ACT NEARLY ALLIED TO SACRILEGE, affording legitimate ground for lamentation and complaint."

The "concentration of patronage" is protested against as "a direct invasion of vested rights;" and "in the recommendations relative to minor corporations in Cathedrals, we find a contempt for the rights of property, a defiance of the respect due to the memory of our founders, and an open avowal of indifference to the constitution of choral establishments, which fills us with unfeigned astonishment and sorrow." The Reverend Dignitaries close their remonstrance with a prayer, that, "if alterations must be made, they may be for the glory and efficiency of the Church, not for its dishonour and abasement; that if sacrifices are required, they may not be such as will overturn the whole economy of our most ancient and sacred institutions."

Such is the spirit of meekness, such are the accents of humility and decency, with which Church Reform, even in its most unquestionable shape, is received by Cathedral dignities; in the mere recommendation of which by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, and the other members of the Commission of the late Supreme Head of the Church on earth, they perceive AN ACT NEARLY ALLIED TO SACRILEGE! Well might Luther aver,

"Religio nunquam periclitatur nisi inter reverendissimos."

Among the mass of canonic and prebendal opposition to the suggestions of the Royal Commissioners must not be omitted, the separate and facetious commentary of the Rev. Sydney Smith, Prebendary of St. Paul's.—"There can be no charm in the name of Bishop," says the Reverend Prebendary; and if one may judge from the following skilful and inferential passage of his letter to Archdeacon Singleton, there is nothing so absolutely *illecebral* in the dignity of an Archbishop, as to shield him from any insinuation of perjury which one of his own Clergy may venture to adumbrate. "There is an awkward passage in the memorial of the Church of Canterbury, which deserves some consideration from him to whom it is directed. The Archbishop of Canterbury, at his consecration, takes a solemn oath that he will maintain the rights and liberties of the Church of Canterbury; as chairman, however, of the new commission, he seizes the patronage of that Church, takes two-thirds of its revenue, and abolishes two-thirds of its members. That there is an answer to this, I am very willing to believe, but I cannot at present find out what it is; and their attack upon the revenues and members of Canterbury, is not obedience to an Act of Parliament, but the very Act of Parliament which takes away, is recommended, drawn up, and signed by the person who swore he will never take away; and this little apparent inconsistency is not

confined to the Archbishop of Canterbury, but is shared equally by all the Bishop Commissioners, who have all, (unless I am grievously mistaken) taken similar oaths for the preservation of their respective chapters. It would be more easy to see our way out of this little embarrassment, if some of the embarrassed had not unfortunately, in the Parliamentary debates on the Catholic Question, laid the greatest stress upon the King's oath, applauded the sanctity of the Monarch to the skies, rejected all comments, called for the oath in its plain meaning, and attributed the safety of the English Church to the solemn vow made by the King at the altar, to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, and the other Bishops. I should be very sorry if this were not placed on a clear footing, as fools will be imputing to our Church the *pia et religiosa caliditas*, which is so commonly brought against the Catholics,

Melibœe, putavi
Urbem quam dicunt Romam,
Stultus ego huic nostræ similem."

More follows in the same strain, which may be found at pages 14 and 15 of the Reverend Prebendary's pamphlet.

Now, Berni's* indulgent consideration for the

* Speaking of the veracious history of Archbishop Turpin, the poet remarks :

Io non vo disputar se dice il vero,
O pur falsamente glie l'appone,
Perchè egli era Arcivescovo, bisogna
Credergli, ancor que dica la menzogna.
Orl. Inn. c. xviii.

Archiespiscopal historian of his own creed scarcely afforded a justifiable precedent for the foregoing animadversions; though, when in addition to the above, the same dignified clergyman of the Established Church, accuses his Ecclesiastical superiors of being parties, "under a temporary delirium," to an episode of plunder, "involving three separate acts of gross injustice," of a desire to enjoy at the same time the character of great disinterestedness, and "the luxury of unjust spoliation," the Lay Churchman, combining this substantive diatribe with the corporate invectives of the Deans and Chapters, may not unreasonably allege the pressure of his own DILEMMAS.

The minor Clergy, whether from motives of caution, or from the remoteness of their interest in the booty contended for, have taken no prominent part in the struggle for patronage, but some of their number have hastened to stigmatize certain laws or matters which are unacceptable to them as members of a dominant and grasping priesthood. Thus, whatever may be the defects of the New Poor Law, the Clergy are bound not to obstruct it; nevertheless, one Clergyman headed the rabble in the town of Cambridge, proclaiming its provisions to be grievous and oppressive.* The manner in which the Marriage Act was promulgated by the Clergy in London and its vicinity, was animadverted on in

* It has been stated publicly, that the Rev. Gentleman's procedure brought down upon him the censure of his Diocesan.

Parliament; and as for the rural districts, the poor have been informed from the reading desk, that, as regards members of the Church of England, the law of matrimony remains unaltered, and their right to be married without the publication of banns, having appeared before the Registrar, was not imparted to them.* It is generally supposed likewise, that the

* The Rev. Dr. Croly escapes from the charge of insubordination, as his sermon on Marriage, preached before the Lord Mayor, and published by that functionary's desire, was delivered some months before the New Act, then under discussion, was passed into a law. But his charity was exemplified in his questioning "what must be the public effect of a transfer from the Altar of the Church to the *hovel* of the first fantastic shape of rambling dissent that usurps the title of religion?" and whether "the hut, the obscure haunt of some fanaticism too crude to have found a name, and which, as it has been, may be turned to the most vulgar uses, will be fitter than the roof which for ages has echoed to piet yand prayer!" "The Clergy," says the divine, "have no weapons, and desire to have none, but remonstrances; wishing, entirely wishing, to leave the personal contentions of public life to other men."—But it seems the Clergy can sometimes wield the battle axe of intolerance, and mingle in the combat when they can gratify their virulence. In the fruitful imagination of the poet and divine, the ceremonial of marriage is to be adjourned to "the humblest functionary of vulgar police, and there, in the midst of every sight and sound of low depravity," the astonished and disgusted bride "is to be led to receive the pledge to be true to her *so long* as the civil contract may be suffered to bind." The marriage ceremony, however, of the Established Church contains expressions much more calculated to astonish and disgust than the form which the reverend gentleman's invention has embellished. He allows, indeed that there are passages rather broad, but "virtually extinct, for they are never read at the altar;" but in this he goes rather too far; the rich may indeed purchase exemption from indecency, but the whole

Bishops of the Establishment have a claim upon the duty and reverence of the subordinate Clergy, who swear at their ordination, as Deacons, that they will reverently obey their ordinary and other chief ministers of the Church, following, with a glad mind and will, their godly admonitions; and as the Sovereign's mandate for the consecration of a Bishop is read at the time of his ordination, Clergymen are bound to treat the appointment of the King, who is the supreme head of the Church, with decency. Yet it does not appear that this opinion is universal; at least, the Clergy of Norwich are an exception, as will appear from the following extract from the Norwich Mercury, describing their conduct at the dinner given to the new Bishop, after preaching a Sermon in aid of the funds of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge. "After the dinner, Archdeacon Glover rose and begged to amend an omission he had understood to be intentional, and

exhortation is not unfrequently read for the edification of the poor. Dr. Croly must know that every clergyman who mutilates any portion of the Prayer-book service, being guilty of perjury, is liable to punishment, and he has no more right to garble the ceremonial of matrimony, than to omit the prayer in the Litany for Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. The last, probably, is never done; but when the reverend divine alludes to the past or possible desecration of Dissenting places of worship, how does he dispose of the fact, that, according to the practice of the Church, a marriage, under the sanction of a special licence, may be performed in the boudoir of a titled demirep?

to ask permission of the Bishop to allow his Sermon of that day to be published."

The Rev. Lord Bayning immediately rose and said, "Gentlemen, the omission of the request was intentional, and I avow it—for this reason, because I cannot be supposed to identify myself with, or sanction opinions such as those contained in the sermon." "This speech was received by the Clergy and Conservatives present with shouts of applause." Surely, if the foregoing quotation be founded on fact, the dilemmas of the inquisitive Churchman will be increased by some additional faltering. But the chief mischief accruing from the above offensive transaction is this:—The Mayor and Corporation waited on the Bishop next day, in order to disavow any participation in the conduct of the recusant Clergy; and his Lordship is represented as closing his speech in reply to their address with the assurance, that he would at all times support those political principles he had through life avowed. So that the ceremony of the Installation of the Bishop, by many held to be of a religious character, and the sermon delivered by his Lordship on behalf of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, issued in a scene of indecorous irritation and a declaration of political steadfastness. To the fatal alliance of religion with politics, this discreditable occurrence is to be imputed; for, if the Bishop had not possessed a seat in the House of Lords, that enlightened prelate would not have been

affronted by his subordinate officials, when, in the discharge of a solemn and charitable duty, he was scarcely risen from his seat in the house of God.*

The case of the Curate at Leeds, who on the judgment of a Bench of Magistrates had been proved guilty of a deliberate attempt to evade the Registration Act, and was fined accordingly, must have excited some conflicting sensations in the minds of those who are of opinion, that a clergyman should avoid any prominence of obstruction to an enactment of the Legislature, however "obnoxious" it may be to him and his immediate superior who might confederate with him "to obey it only to the bare letter." But we cannot stay to discuss how

* A pluralist is stated to have said about this time, that the same Prelate was no more fit to be a Bishop than his pointer! This statement has appeared in print, but recurrence to it at this moment being impracticable, the name of the Reverend Reviler is suppressed.

The Patriot of the 23rd and 30th of October, gives the following extracts from speeches made by two Clergymen of the Church of England at public dinners. The Rev. Mr. Campbell of Liverpool, one of the beneficed Clergy, having declared himself to have been always a *conciliator*, said, " Hold out the right hand of fellowship to every Conservative, *whatever his religion may be.* But as for those political agitators calling themselves Dissenters, *we must count them enemies*, not to ourselves, but to the British Monarchy." Again, the Rev. Mr. Newcomb declared, " The crisis was now arrived, when a man, if he had not a sword, ought to sell his garment and buy one. He for one was resolved to do his duty against the common enemy (of the Church), and so help him God, if the cause was good, he cared not whether he died upon the scaffold or the field."

far it is incumbent upon Clergymen of the Establishment, "to be a wholesome example and spectacle of obedience to the law," in spirit and in truth.*

A similar disregard of the influence of their conduct on such important occasions, extends to the proceedings of certain of the Clergy on matters which may be pronounced questionable only, according to different views of their bearing on society. For instance, the frequent appearance of Clergymen of the Established Church on the hustings, or at public political dinners is condemned

* See a report of the investigation of this case before the Magistrates of Leeds in the Patriot Newspaper, 25th September last.

The following placards posted in the Parishes of St. Matthew, Bethnal Green, and St. Leonard's, Shoreditch, and which appeared in the Newspapers, will also give evidence of the animus with which some of the Clergy obey an Act of Parliament, when it is adverse to their political or selfish views.

PLACARDS ON THE SUBJECT OF BIRTHS, MARRIAGES AND DEATHS.

St. Matthew, Bethnal Green.

The Clergy of this parish take this opportunity of correcting some most erroneous impressions amongst their parishioners respecting the late acts for registering births, marriages, and deaths.

Persons intending to be married, or to have their children christened, *are under no necessity of making application at any Register-office whatever.*

Banns of marriage will continue to be published in the church, and marriages, either by banns or licence, will be solemnized precisely as before. Baptism will be administered, and the names of

by one party as too secularizing, possibly as highly discreditable; while by others it is extolled as tending

the persons baptized *will be registered in the Church Register exactly as at present.*

The Clergy most earnestly and affectionately call the attention of their parishioners to the importance of the religious observance of the above solemn rites; and would suggest to them that, *although they will be enabled (though for this there is no necessity), to register the births of their children at a Register Office, for merely civil and worldly purposes,* yet that facility will not excuse their neglect in risking the everlasting punishment of their children's souls, by suffering them to grow up without having received Christian baptism; for on this point both the example and commands of Jesus Christ are most express, inasmuch as He himself submitted to this ordinance at the hands of John the Baptist, and also declared, that "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," St. Mark, chap. x. ver. 14; and again, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God," St. Mark, chap. xvi. ver. 16.

They deem it almost unnecessary to suggest (especially to the minds of the virtuous and religious females of this parish) the propriety of entering upon the solemn and important relation of matrimony in the temple and presence of the God who has sanctioned that relation, instead of entering upon such a state in the presence of a lay and merely civil officer, without the sanction of any religious service, or the bond of any religious obligation.

Rev. Joshua King, M.A., Rector.
Rev. James Mayne, M.A., Curate and Lecturer.
Rev. Charles J. Daniel, M.A., Curate.
Rev. Bryan King, M.A., Minister of St. John's.

St. Leonard, Shoreditch.

MARRIAGES, BAPTISMS, AND BURIALS.

Whereas it is enacted, among other things, in "An Act for Marriages in England," passed 17th August, 1836, "that all the rules

to the conservation of the Establishment; and their sedulous attendance on the chase* and at balls,

prescribed by the Rubrick concerning the solemnizing of marriages shall continue to be duly observed by every person in holy orders of the Church of England who shall solemnize any marriage in England;"

Notice is hereby given, that marriages will be solemnized in the parish church of St. Leonard, Shoreditch, by licence, or by special licence, or after publication of banns, at the usual hours as heretofore. And

Whereas also, it is provided in the 49th section of an Act for Registering Births, Deaths, and Marriages in England, passed 17th August, 1836, that nothing therein contained shall affect the registration of baptism or burials, as then by law established.

The parishioners and the public in general are hereby respectfully informed, that the sacred rites of baptism and burial will be solemnized as heretofore, in the said parish church; and *proper registers thereof carefully made and kept, according to the legal forms by the clergy.*

CHARLES LEDSHAM,
THOMAS REECE, } Churchwardens.

* In a pamphlet under the name of Fundamental Church Reform, confidently ascribed to an honourable and distinguished Clergyman, it is stated, (p. 47, first Edition) "Numbers (of the Clergy), unless the newspapers calumniate them, are still seen at places of fashionable amusement. Norfolk is said to be filled with Clergymen devoted to shooting, and Lincolnshire with those who hunt." But the newspapers do *not* calumniate these "multitudes of frivolous, sporting, ball-going, unlearned, and worldly minded men." (p. 48.) The Exeter Times not long since, enumerated thirteen clerical gentlemen by name, as attendants and stewards at a public ball, several of whom made themselves conspicuous at a Fox-chase next day. The account adds, that a short time before, four Meetings had been held in the town, namely, the London Hibernian Society, the Church Sunday School Society, the Church Missionary Society, and the Bible Society, at which not one of the Divines named, made their appear-

may have the effect of exhibiting a salutary contrast of hilarity, to the ascetic acerbity of the Dissenting Minister, who, possibly in common with others of a different religious persuasion, deems it incongruous that the hand which yesterday was brandishing the hunting-whip, should to-day hold forth the sacred chalice, and that the same lips, which on Saturday were shouting out incentives to the hounds, should, on the Sabbath, declare from the altar, the divine conditions of salvation.

ance. For the correction of these Ministers of Christ, the editor annexed the following apposite quotation from a charge of the late Bishop of Limerick. "I do not see how a Clergyman consistently with the edification of his flock, committed to his charge, or consistently with the vows made at his ordination, can pursue the sports of the field, can resort to the race ground or the theatre, can be found at the card table, or in the ball room. In avowing these sentiments, I avow the sentiments which have from the earliest ages of the Church been maintained, alike by the old Catholic bishops and fathers, and by the most distinguished and illustrious Churchmen of modern times."

These remarks are of course not intended to detract from the fascination evinced in Tory accounts with the skill manifested by the veteran prelates as equestrians and marksmen. "Yes, Mr. Scott," said the gentle but high spirited old man, "I still like to feel my horse under me." He (Bishop Barrington) was then in his 79th year, and survived to the age of 92, the model in all things of *a real prince of the Church*. Lockhart's Life of Scott.—Thanks to the present ministry, this hybrid species in British hierarchical zoology is now extinct.

"The venerable Archbishop of York has arrived at Bishopsthorpe Palace. His Grace, who has occupied the Episcopal bench 46 years, is one of the keenest sportsmen of our ancient nobility."—*John Bull, 3rd September*, 1837.

Scarcely had the Queen's Printer organized the association against the freedom of Irish election, than the Clergy of the Established Church rushed forward to record their subscriptions,* never heeding for a moment that the people would be prone to inquire whether it was the intention of those who provided for the legal maintenance of the Clergy, by the grant of tithes, that the sums thus exacted from their earnings should be dissipated in endeavours to destroy their liberties by the abuse of that very wealth to which they are required to contribute. These things are laid to heart, and the consequences are approaching; a consummation which the partizans of intolerance affect to dread from the application of reform, but which will in fact be the result of their own blind denial of it to the Church, in its most moderate shape. It may be asserted, however, without fear of contradiction, that not one out of a thousand of the most uncompromising defenders of the existing Ecclesiastical system is so uncandid as to deny that it is alloyed by imperfection, but he deprecates its correction as dangerous and unjust. Useful reform, it is alleged, will only open the door to pernicious innovation, and the stability of the Church Establishment will be impaired. But objectors

* It has been intimated in the House of Commons, that 1150 Protestant Clergymen have subscribed to this fund for controlling elections.

to salutary alteration will not look around and mark the daily events which press for their attention. They will not recognise the truth, that the reflecting man who has detected an error of importance will not be content until it be eradicated. The Bigot will not perceive that Dissent is hourly advantaged by the pertinacity with which the Establishment hugs its own admitted defects; while the enquiring Churchman, distracted by a crowd of dilemmas, ponders on the abandonment of a fellowship becoming more and more corrupt from the exclusion of all purification. The slightest amendment is scouted solely from political and fastidious apprehension.

The Liturgy was confessedly left incomplete by the early Reformers, who had the task of adapting it to conflicting tastes. This was admitted by Cranmer and Bucer, and subsequently by Jewel and Nowell; and so far were Tillotson, Patrick, Tennison, Stillingfleet, &c. from acting in the selfish and worldly spirit of their degenerate successors, that they used their utmost efforts to obtain more effective improvements. Bishop Lowth complained that the Reformation had "stopped in the midway." Bishop Watson required "some further innovations" to bring it to perfection; and with all his asserted zeal for the Church of England, Bishop Burnet affirmed, "there are many things in it that have been very uneasy to me." In a still later period, Bishop Porteus proposed to

Archbishop Cornwallis and the Bench of Bishops to amend some obviously objectionable passages in the Liturgy, and more especially in the Articles; but the result was the opinion of the Bench of Bishops in general, that nothing could in prudence be done in the matter. This prudent abnegation of all Reform in the Liturgy has not only been acted upon by the succeeding members of the hierarchy, but they have extended their hostility to projects of direct and undoubted sanctity and usefulness, lest they should be ancillary to the reduction of High-church domination.

The opposition past and existing of many Bishops* and other Clergymen to the Bible Society is notorious. When the City Mission, an institution founded on the purest principles of Christianity and love towards men, was established, some of the minor Clergy were disposed to give it their support, but a mandate from high ecclesiastical authority to one of them who had

* The Rev. Sydney Smith, in his letter to Archdeacon Singleton, adduces an instance of a Curate being removed by a Bishop from his charge because he supported the Bible Society in opposition to his diocesan's wishes. Generally speaking, the case of Curates is one of great hardship, owing to their dependance on the will of the Bishops. The beneficed Clergy, on the contrary, especially in the country, have far too many opportunities of exercising large and petty tyranny on their poorer parishioners, a faculty which some of them exert to an extent to detail which would be tedious. In fact, the abuse of power by incumbents should, on a revision, be one of the first objects of correction.

made himself conspicuous on the occasion, prohibited him from all further co-operation. It was for the benefit of this Society, or another equally laudable, but equally uncanonical, that a certain Rector was about to open his church-door, when a peremptory prohibition was fulminated from an irresistible quarter against thus entertaining the claims of destitute ignorance and Christian charity —and what was the reason of the prelatic ban? Some drivelling about irregular preaching, the concurrence of the Ordinary, and the hated amalgamation with Dissenters in works of mercy. Upon Christian principles, this obstruction of the course of benevolence cannot be vindicated, but the Canons forbid irregular preaching! A Clergyman cannot preach to more than twenty persons, besides the family, assembled in a dwelling-house; it is not lawful to save more than nineteen souls at once, except the priest has donned his surplice, and persuades to salvation according to strict ecclesiastical rule and costume. Many good and meek evangelical clergymen deplore these restrictions, which exclude them from a wide field of usefulness, now cultivated by the Dissenters, by the Christian Instruction Society, by the City Mission, and by the Home Missionary Society, who remedy the neglect and compensate for the inability of the Church Ministers.

Perceiving the popularity of these institutions, according to their own precedent of humbly

following in the path of improvement, when it has been cleansed from irregular stumbling blocks, and carefully abstaining from original utility, some of the Clergy were shamed into the formation of the Pastoral Aid Society; an imitation of the City Mission, only that its operations are carefully clogged and encumbered by provisos, that no good shall be done by it, "except with the concurrence of the Ordinary." The City Mission, a Society full of piety and Christian kindness, being set on foot by Dissenters, and supported by Churchmen no better than Dissenters, was to be put down by counteraction, and the charitable emulousness of orthodox imitation. The great object of prelacy, and of the parasites of prelacy is, to prevent all association with their non-conforming brethren, who are without as dogs, and of whose concision they bid their flocks beware. A small number of the Bishops have at any time supported the Bible Society; none patronize that vast and prolific engine of charity, the Tract Society; and the venom of their prejudices circulates to an immense extent among their dependent clergy.*

* In a district containing two clergymen in a very small space, both these ministers have repeatedly refused to aid in the distribution of the publications of the Tract Society, and in the formation of a Local Bible Association. The consequence was that the foundation of a Bible Association has at last been laid with the co-operation of a handful of Dissenters; and the tracts are disseminated (a work of much labour) by the feeble hands of an individual female. If any

But though the Established priesthood may indeed gratify their spleen by abstaining from fellowship with Dissenters in endeavours to benefit mankind, they cannot much longer withhold efficient Church Reform, and the correction of the Liturgy, without deeply injuring the cause of Christianity. The difficulty of stopping innovation when once admitted, is the plea for an unqualified refusal of amendment. The Church would be endangered! But this implies an extraordinary distrust of their own ability to preserve an ascendancy, fortified by its connection with almost the whole of the Aristocracy, by enormous endowments, and by the advantages derived from long confirmed habits of patrimonial acquiescence. Is the doctrine of the Church of England, of which the Queen is the sworn supreme Head, propounded from thousands of Cathedrals and Churches by salaried men, lineally descended from the Apostles, so tender as to shrink from the pruning of its excrescences, so powerless to secure its professors from the wheedling of Dissenters, who have only got the bare Bible, humiliation, and

reward should be hereafter vouchsafed to this work of faith and obedience, the reverend functionaries who declined to encourage it must be prepared to avow, "we had no part in it."

The Bible Association has been established since the above was written, but it is absolutely frightful to reflect, that numbers absented themselves from the meeting, lest they should offend their Ministers by personally countenancing the circulation of the word of God!

double payments by the congregation to offer as inducements to apostatize? No, it is not their doctrine and communion which they are unable to vindicate, but it is their obsolete forms and discipline in their present corrupt state which they cannot justify, and it is their attachment to worldly and unscriptural domination, not their existence as a favoured sect which is assailed.

It cannot be long before the sitting of the Bishops in Parliament, "the very ascarides," as Mr. Bridges calls it, "of the commonwealth," will cease by the demand of the people. This practice is so palpable, so crying, so unjustifiable a departure from the express rules laid down by Our Lord for the guidance of his disciples in every age, that it is impossible that the Church of England can stand secure, while it is polluted by disobedience so utterly indefensible. If the Church be in danger, it is this flagrant abuse which contributes to its peril: if it day by day becomes more unacceptable to the community, it is this unrighteous contravention of Gospel humility* which foments the

* Mr. Hallam has justly observed, that "the conferring the title of Lord on our Colonial Bishops is not founded in reason," as possessing no baronies, the only colourable plea for the abuse is removed. Nevertheless, the first Bishop of Calcutta expressly applied for the title of "Lord," and on his arrival in his diocese demanded to be received with a military salute. He accordingly landed under "a salvo of great ordnance" from the ramparts of Fort William. The Natives, whose own priests profess and practise habits of the utmost lowliness, and whose personal demeanour is

alienation: if it totters on its usurped predominance, it is this suicidal tenaciousness of prelacy which will precipitate its fall.*

So much has been said and written even by Churchmen, both clerical and lay, on the above subject, that it may be thought superfluous to dwell upon it in this place; but, on tracing the causes of the enquirer's dilemmas, this slight recurrence to it was unavoidable. In like manner, the exposure of the defects in the Liturgy having occupied the pens even of dignitaries in the Church, the allusion to them in these pages must be very rapid, though the diversity of their opinions cannot be altogether passed over. There is less that offends in the Sunday offices of the Liturgy than in the occasional services connected with it. Indeed, when the word offend is used, it should be employed with some

singularly simple, were sadly puzzled how to designate this composite character. The Persian, the Hindoostanee language, nay, the sesquipedalian Sanscrit itself failed to furnish a synonime, and the people were at last reduced to give the stranger an Anglo-Portuguese name, and called him Lord Padre. They then added their own title of respect, and the Bishop of Calcutta is now announced at the Government House fêtes as Lord Padre Sahib, which being interpreted from its trilingual confusion, means, "Mister Lord Priest!"

* Ardently as I wish to see the Bishops exonerated from their legislative functions, the *magis amica veritas* principle impels me to regret that any clergyman should at a public dinner embody that wish in the expression "that he hoped to see the Bishops *kicked out* of the House of Lords."

degree of qualification. The lovers of a liturgical form of prayer must despair of finding a more beautiful and energetic exemplar of devout congregational supplication than is comprised in our Liturgy. Only prune its exuberance, and elucidate one or two passages, and the Liturgy will maintain its hold on the affections of numberless Christians in this country, amidst the unceasing conflicts of sects, and in despite of the possible extinction of ecclesiastical establishments. But it must not be forgotten that we have high authority for using language, however strong, in reprobation of the Athanasian Creed. Archbishop Tillotson wished "we were well rid of it." Bishop Watson called it "a motley monster of bigotry and superstition; a scarecrow of shreds and patches, dressed up of old by philosophers and popes to amuse the speculative and to affright the ignorant." And he asserted that he had seen numerous instances of its having made young men infidels for life." The late excellent and disinterested Mr. Simpson, in his Plea for Religion, branded its leading proposition as "hellish." After the above language, to affirm that the abomination of hearing this Creed read, and being required to join in its comminations, disturbs the devotion of thousands, would be to sink into bathos.*

In the office of the Visitation of the Sick,

* Some clergymen omit to read it, though the omission involves a breach of their canonical engagements.

nothing can be more clearly declared than the unqualified authoritative forgiveness of the sins of the sick person by the personal instrumentality of the priest. "By his authority, I absolve thee from all thy sins;" and yet immediately afterwards follows a prayer to the Almighty to take him after death into his favour. The previous pardon therefore is incomplete, if the succeeding interposition is requisite. If it be incomplete, and the dying man trusts in the priest's declaration, he expires in delusion; and if he cling rather to the efficacy of reliance on God for pardon, as besought in the Collect, the assumption of the faculty of pardoning absolutely by the priest, can only serve still further to perplex his weakened intellect and disturb the tranquillity of his departure. The expression "power to his Church," would of course awaken abundance of controversy, as, without reference to what the great body of Christians understand by the term "Church," the Prayer-book attaches so many various meanings to it, that the mind of the enquiring Churchman is studded with dilemmas as to the propriety and virtue of this "order."*

* Not the Prayer-book only, but Christians of all times have applied varied meanings to the term, from the Ubi tres Ecclesia of Tertullian, down to Lord King's "Enquiry," into which controversy it is not desirable to enter. But let us only look into the Liturgy and we shall perceive contradictions very difficult to reconcile. In the Liturgy and its concomitant prayers we pray for the Church as the "Holy Church Universal," "Thy Holy Church," "the

Bishop Philpotts* gives the following illustration of it. "Remind them, (the people,) that in the Church only is the promise of the forgiveness of

Catholic Church." In the Te Deum occurs the phrase: "The Holy Church throughout all the world does acknowledge thee." Passing on to the "Occasional Prayers," we pray for the good of "Thy church," and "the whole church," in the same prayer. In the Collects we pray for "thy church and household." In that for Good Friday, the "whole body of the church" is referred to, and "all estates of men in thy holy church" are prayed for. In the Communion, we are invited to "pray for the whole state of Christ's church militant." We pray that "we and all thy whole church." In the Baptism of Infants, prayer is made for the child, that he may be saved "with the residue of thy holy church." In the Commination, we quote the practice of the "primitive church." In one of the prayers in the Gunpowder Treason service, in the course of the same few lines, occur the expressions, "deliverance of thy church," and be ascribed all honour and glory in "all churches of the Saints." In the thanksgiving for the King's Restoration we find "this whole Church and State." Lastly, the 12th Article states "the visible church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men," &c. Now this agglomeration of church synonymes forms a perfect hive of dilemmas. To pray for the "Holy Church Universal" is not identical with praying for "all churches of the Saints." In the former phrase, the Roman Catholic persuasion must be comprised because we acknowledge the validity of Popish orders; in the latter it is evidently excluded, because it occurs in the form for the 5th of Nov. which is principally directed against the Roman Catholics. "Thy Holy Church" appears in the prayer against persecution, meaning, it is inferred, by contrast, persecution on the part of the Roman Catholics, but immediately afterwards, the prayer for the Parliament (composed before the Reform

* See the Bishop's Charge, 1836, p. 44-46.

sins; and though to all who truly repent, and sincere believers, Christ manifestly grants forgiveness, yet he has, in an essential manner, empowered his ministers to declare and pronounce to his people the absolution and remission of their sins. 'Whosesoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained.' This was the awful authority given to his first ministers, and in them, and through them, to all their successors. This is the authority which we have received, and which we must never be afraid nor ashamed to tell the people that we have received." And he distinctly claims for the clergy the ability "not merely to *preach* to them, that *if* they repent, they *will* be forgiven, but also to pronounce to them, his (Christ's) full and free abso-

Bill) intercedes for God's Church, and the whole Church. In the service for Good Friday, the same Collect adverts to the whole body of the Church, and supplicates for "all estates of men in thy holy church." In a separate Collect, we implore mercy on "all Jews, Turks, infidels, and heretics." Now, as the Catholics do not belong to any of these classes, as we acknowledge their holy orders, it must be intended, either to omit them altogether in our intercession, which would be preposterously and wickedly uncharitable, or to include them in the "holy church." A fortiori, Protestant denominations differing from us on minor points, come within the pale. So that while contention is made for the exclusiveness of the Anglican Church, our forms, our prayers, and, it may be added, our articles, declare its comprehensiveness. How the advocates of exclusiveness, who pronounce the Church of England to be the only true Church, reconcile these inconsistencies, has never been very lucidly propounded.

lution from all their sins." "Let them see . . . that he (the minister) does this even as the Apostles did, with the authority and by the appointment of our Lord himself." I will not pretend to say what is the practice in the political county of Devon, but it is an undoubted fact, that elsewhere the injunctions of the Bishop of Exeter fail to convince many Clergymen, who, sheltering themselves under the letter of the Rubric, hesitate to assert their faculty of salvation, and rejoice when the sick person omits to ask for that absolution which they are bound not to refuse, but which they dread and tremble to administer. Such allegations of the difficulty, perhaps danger of literal conformity to the rules of the Church, are met by Clergymen with the various feelings to which diversity of temperament, sensibility, and extent of conviction give birth. Few can defend the whole without the aid of that sophistical deceiver, expediency; others relinquish the contest in wrath, or suppress it by clamour; and it is not going too far to repeat what has been hinted at or whispered, that some, racked with compunction, retreat from the cause which they cannot vindicate with those agonies of conscience, arising from the conflict of interest and conviction, the acuteness of which their most strenuous antagonist cannot fail to commiserate. Mammon finally triumphs in their vacillation. A remnant, however, honestly submit to the bitter task of recantation, and sacrificing their worldly prospects, secede from

a communion which has lost their religious confidence.*

Remember, remember,
The fifth of November,
The gunpowder treason and plot.

It is to be hoped that henceforth the form of commemorating the happy deliverance of King James I. from the most traitorous and bloody intended massacre by gunpowder, will be left to the juvenile Protestants who infest the streets on the above anniversary, and that the command to celebrate this obsolete ordinance, productive only of exasperation or derision, which is scarcely ever carried into effect, will be practically rescinded.†

The next occasional service admits of no light reference, because the language of its forms has exposed it to an imputation to which no man who attentively and impartially considers its spirit, can deny its being obnoxious. Its comparisons involve a parallel from which our allegiance to HIM

* The Eclectic Review of February, 1836, enumerates thirteen Clergymen who have separated from the Establishment, six of them having surrendered benefices, between 1823 and 1834. In 1836, two more seceded, and a third has recently been announced as having resigned (in 1837) his fellowship, and joined the Baptist denomination.

† This service was omitted in the Chapel Royal on the last 5th of November. Dr. Ebrington, however, resigned on its exclusion from the Castle of Dublin, creating a discrepancy in the procedure of the Church somewhat augmentative of the dilemmas of Churchmen.

who is incomparable recoils in dismay, and a construction of blasphemy at which we instinctively shudder. Happily, this most questionable, if not guilty form, is almost universally neglected, and fallen into desuetude.*

* Mr. Rutt, in his second edition of the life of Calamy, (Vol. ii. p. 14.) quotes the following passage from Lord Dover's "Inquiries respecting Clarendon:"—"The University of Oxford had two portraits made of Christ and of Charles I. exactly similar in every respect, and with an account of the sufferings of each at the bottom of his respective likeness.

"These pictures, in the memory of persons now alive, were hung up as *pendants* to one another in the Bodleian Library;" one is since "removed into the Picture Gallery. Both may still be examined by those who are curious in tracing the baseness and blasphemy of the supporters, in old times, of the doctrines of passive obedience."

The same Editor calls our attention to Young's "Last Day," in which the Reverend Poet, in order to flatter Queen Anne, represents Charles I, standing amidst "spotless saints and laurelled martyrs," before the awful seat of eternal judgment:—

> "His lifted hands his lofty neck surround,
> To hide the scarlet of a circling wound;
> The Almighty Judge bends forward from his throne
> Those scars to mark, and then regards his own."

I would beseech those who still advocate the retention of this most culpable form in our Prayer Book to refer more especially to the extracts from the Psalms, &c. which compose the introductory sentences, and to the portion of the Gospel appointed for the occasion, and then conscientiously ask themselves whether they will any longer sanction the blasphemous application of the inspired predictions and narratives of the mighty sacrifice of our blessed Redeemer, to the comparatively insignificant catastrophe of an erring mortal.

With regard to the thanksgiving for "the restitution of the King and Royal family," (which we wisely took the earliest opportunity of expelling,) it is only to be remarked, that if Charles the First deserved to be beheaded, (which many conscientiously believe, though the sentence was irregularly pronounced and executed) his son and successor deserved to be hanged.

A few words of correction in the Burial service (the uncharitable part of the Rubric being expunged), would perhaps make this pathetic and sublime ordinance as perfect as any human composition of the same character can be rendered; but even the simple and unobjectionable emendation* which is called for by thousands, is refused

* Dr. Lee, the Regius professor of Hebrew at Cambridge, having proposed to get rid of an objectionable phrase in this service by the simple expedient of the officiating Clergyman's omitting it altogether whenever his conscience assures him that he ought to do so, Dr. Pye Smith, in the blandest possible manner, reminds the professor, that such an omission would be a violation of the 68th canon, and that it would subject the minister, so acting, to a suspension of three months. Some Clergymen would consider themselves guilty of perjury if they should wilfully depart from the Rubric. But the most serious objection of all does not seem to have occurred to Dr. Smith, viz. that if the minister were allowed to deviate according to his discretion from the strict letter of the ceremony, a power of judging a fellow-creature would be vested in him which no fallible man is competent to use, and the exercise of which would expose him to constant obloquy. Archbishop Whateley in his Errors of Romanism states: "I have known a person, in speaking of a deceased neighbour, whose character had been irreligious and profli-

by the small minority of hieresiarchs, who, under the cloak of prudence, gratify their pestilent antipathy to salutary alteration. The same revision is denied to the Baptismal service, which involves the doctrine of immediate regeneration by the performance of that rite; yet nobody can be ignorant that this question has divided Christians for ages, and that the retention of the service in its existing shape cannot but have the effect of perpetuating divisions, exciting doubts, or encouraging indifference.*

To these causes of grievance and dilemma may be added the ill-advised conduct of certain of the Clergy at the present conjuncture, which supplies ample materials for dissatisfaction. The attempt now in progress by the Archdeacons to enforce their obsolete claims of irresponsible power in the

gate, remark, how great a comfort it was to hear the words of the Funeral Service read over her, "because she had been such a bad liver."

* The manner also in which the Canons are acted upon by the Clergy, is a subject of astonishment to those who look for consistency. They seem to be employed either as an engine of oppression, or as an excuse for laxity. Discretion is to be left to neglect or observe them, according to the suggestion of the Bishop of Winchester, notwithstanding a recent legal opinion. It is clear, however, that the anomalous condition of this obsolete code cannot be maintained. Its provisions must be uniformly enforced or abrogated. The usages of society, and their collision with the statute law prohibit such enforcement, but their abrogation would destroy a piece of antique and solemn mockery, while it afforded to the Clergy a relief from the inconveniences of uncertain obligations.

Ecclesiastical Courts in cases of the refusal of Church Rates, a contest, which whether it terminate favourably or otherwise to the pretensions of those dignitaries, cannot fail to alienate the popular affection from a Church, which thus revives bygone statutes for the purposes of oppression. Next comes a frantic memorial from the Rev. G. Townshend and others petitioning for the separation of Church and State, for the maintenance of which union the formularies of the Church* expressly require them to pray, and protesting against the Ecclesiastical prerogative of the King as their supreme head which they have sworn to respect.

There is one consideration, however, which contributes more than any of the proofs of dereliction relative to Church matters already adduced, to gravel the conclusions of him who seeks to form them, not according to prescription and inherited prejudice, but on the solid basis of deliberate investigation. Allusion has been made to the divisions of opinion among the Clergy of the Establishment. If these controversies had been on unimportant points, the Clergy might have been left alone with their wrangling; but it becomes a serious subject of anxiety, when the doctrines preached and disseminated by one section of the Established Church are denounced by the

* See the last prayers in the form for the 5th of November, the last Collect in the Morning service for the 30th January, and the service for the King's Restoration.

other. The Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge was charged in November, 1836, by a Clergyman of the Church of England, with "having put forth twelve volumes of tracts, so unfit, in his judgment, for the purpose of circulation, that he studiously concealed them from the eyes of his family, as unsound and delusory statements of the truth of the Gospel." A Sermon on Death by the Rev. Mr. Beresford appears to have been adopted as a tract by the above Society, on which the clerical Editor of the Record pronounced that the men who approved of its circulation had "no conception of the nature, sanctions, and requirements of the Gospel of our salvation;" that they were "blind leaders of the blind;" and that, in the tracts which they approved, "the Gospel of Christ is either not preached at all, or is so blended and encrusted with error, as to rob it of all its freeness, clearness, and glory; so that the unhappy readers are led away by their instrumentality to another Gospel which is not another." The unfortunate theology of Dr. Spry is declared to be "darkness visible." Another Clergyman, the Rev. Mr. Acaster denouncing "the poisonous influence of the Establishment" on the spiritual character of the ministry of the Church, speaks "of millions being lost for ever and ever from that cause."

The system inculcated in the Oxford Tracts, says the Christian Observer, edited by a Clergyman of the Establishment, "even weeping, we believe

to be anti-evangelical, anti-protestant, and a snare of our ghostly enemy to impede the progress of the Gospel of Christ, and to endanger the souls of men." On the other hand, the Rev. Mr. Newman, the Editor of the Oxford Tracts, while seeking for what he calls a *via media* between Romanism and Protestantism, not only admits* in a substantial sense the allegation of the Roman Catholics, that scarcely ten or twenty neighbouring Clergymen in the English Church can agree even in its elementary and necessary doctrines, but openly pronounces, that "in the Church by itself," "even among its appointed ministers and teachers," "may be found differences as great as those which separate Greece from Rome."

Speaking of the new Oxford school of opinions in matters of Church and State, to which Dr. Pusey belongs, the Edinburgh Reviewer (in the recent No.) remarks upon the extraordinary fact, that "numbers, especially among the Clergy, heretofore attached to what are called Evangelical principles, have gone over and fraternized with the new sect, with which they had no one quality in common but enthusiasm;—passing, as it were, without an effort, from one pole to the other of religious opinion and sentiment, for the sake of the new excitement." The school in question is characterized as forming "one of the three extremes of opinion,

* Lectures on the Prophetical Office of the Church, &c. By John Henry Newman, B.D.

the other two being represented by the Evangelicals and the Latitudinarians, which are comprehended within the Church's tolerant embrace." "The alliance may subsist tolerably well, as long as the confederates are sunk together in the darkness of opposition.

> 'Concordes animæ nunc et dum nocte premuntur;
> Heu quantum inter se bellum, si lumina vitæ
> Aspiciant, quantas acies stragemque ciebant!'

"Should they ever emerge into the day-light of power, the ill-concealed contrast of parties and principles will soon burst out into open hostility, and end in permanent separation." (Ed. Rev. No. cxxxiv. p. 413-415.)

This view of the state of the Church as composed of three extreme parties, agreeing in the dark, bound by law to uniformity, yet at the opposite poles of religious opinion and sentiment, and incapable of permanent union, allowing it to be correct, is ill adapted to alleviate the dilemmas of a thoughtful Churchman. The want of steadiness of opinion among the Evangelicals, as indicated by the numerous converts to the tenets of Dr. Pusey, is also a staggering circumstance, more especially when taken in connection with the extensive spread of the Millenarian fanaticism among the same class, and the still more melancholy instances of Evangelical Clergymen who have become followers of Irving and believers in the Tongue.

The Clergy Aid Society having been formed in opposition, as supposed, to the "Pastoral Aid Society," and "the Rev. Professor Pusey having joined himself to the former," the Record Newspaper warns its readers against a spurious and destructive imitation of the Gospel, and the Rev. Professor's "ruinous delusions;"* and in allusion to the boast of the Rev. Dr. Dealtry, that 6430 Clergymen subscribe to the Christian Knowledge Society, this same journal, the organ of the Evangelical Church party, conducted by a Clergyman, thus fulminates: "We firmly believe that, so far as its own publications—its own proper work—are considered, it has, in all later times, hindered, not advanced, the knowledge of the Gospel, the promotion of true Christian knowledge." In a previous number, the Clerical editor stated his belief, that "three-fifths *of the Clerical members of that Institution were conducting their flocks to* HELL."†

Thus are the Clergy divided with regard to

* The quotations (abridged) in the text, are taken from "What and Who says it," where they are given more at length, and in more systematic concatenation. It is not very surprising that the Record, conducted by an Evangelical Clergyman, should raise its warning voice, when, in one of these tracts, the inferior clergy are indicated as "those who are intrusted with the keys of heaven and hell," and "with the awful and mysterious gift of making the bread and wine Christ's body and blood."

† Thorn's "Union of Church and State Antiscriptural and Indefensible." Of course there can be nothing indecorous in quoting from a book with this title, as the Chapters of Norwich and Exeter are about to petition for the dissolution of that connection.

doctrine, and hence principally the embarrassment of those belonging to the Church, but not within the professional pale, who do not take things for granted. To enlarge, to reason on the difficulty, only augments its intenseness, for, in whatever light it is viewed, its complexity becomes more intricate, and its solution more distant. Owing to the sedulousness with which Tory Administrations, with scarcely any exceptions, fed the Establishment with dignitaries of the High Church stamp, the great majority of the Clergy are not favourable to the Evangelical part of their own communion, and, adopting the aspiration of the late Bishop Jebb, "It is my wish and prayer that I may be saved from the simplicity of Bible religion," they view with extreme distrust those ministers who preach strictly according to the doctrinal articles of the Church. The result has been the fierce controversies which have been referred to, and a line of demarcation between the spiritual tenets of the rival parties. Some polemics, as has been shewn above, have even gone so far as to give countenance to the opinion of Mr. Binney, that the Church of England destroys more souls than it saves. At the present time, when a reform of the Church not only is, but long has been urgently demanded, an audacious assertion is made in Parliament that the Bishops are sitting where they ought not, a Royal Commission is formed which suggests some emendations of local arrangements, rather than of spiritual abuses, and a change

is proposed in the distribution of patronage, against which even Deans and Prebendaries rebel. A breach of the most serious complexion is portended, when lo! a general election is proclaimed, the banner of Toryism floats on the breezes of corruption, the Reverend combatants drop their arms, and swear an eternal union for the perpetuation of abuses. It never occurs all this time to the Evangelical party, that they are conniving to uphold in its viciousness an Establishment, the major part of whose ministers they consider to preach pernicious doctrine, and, by their alleged perversions of the Scripture, to endanger the souls of millions. That is not their concern now. The souls must do their best at such an exigency; and whether at the expense of permitting Ecclesiastical degeneracy to flourish unexposed, whether, by the compromise of consistency, prudence, friendship, good faith or gratitude, the Tory cause is to be promoted, the constitution of the Church is to be maintained intact and unannealed. In extenuation, however, of their defection from the defence of those principles which they have hitherto asserted, the new allies of absolutism, in Church and State proclaim from the pulpit,* that

* Nothing can be more grating to the sensibilities of a religious mind, than the revolution from admiration to displeasure, caused by the spectacle of one in whom we have implicitly trusted as our teacher of divine truth, leaving the legitimate eminence of his superiority; to see the fine gold of Christian precept mingled with the base dross of party rancour, and that a favourite expounder of the deep things of revelation, should stoop to be a political disputant.

the majority of the people desire no alteration in the constitution of the Church, and that the wish for change is confined to a few restless speculators; while the fact is, that the mass of those who advocate or endure stagnation in error, is composed not only of the politically perverse, but of the avowedly indifferent and the hopelessly ignorant; whereas the minority (if it be one) who press for reform, are convinced of its necessity after much anxious examination of the subject, and from their heart's truth, are satisfied that the best, perhaps the only means of preserving the State Church, is by extirpating its defects.* If the Evangelical section can reconcile their discordant sentiments

A Clergyman who thus desecrates his sacred station by uncharitable declamation, cannot expect the continuance of that deference usually ceded to his profession. He may expatiate on Christian Charity with the most glowing energy; but in vain: He has lost his influence except among bigots, and his worldly compeers, and can hope for no more consideration from his opponents, than is consistent with their own self-respect.

* "If we can suppose that, to the people such as they have actually become, it can avail any thing in the way of moral or religious influence—to frequent Church five times in the year—to be christened, confirmed, married, in due form;—to receive the sacrament at the last exigency, and to be buried as believers. The nation has gone beyond the power of these forms. The Parish Church stands where it did; but the mind of the country has escaped from between the sacred walls. Not universally indeed; far otherwise:—we are speaking, not of the passive and sluggish portion of the community; but of the active, and sensitive, and intelligent—or the half intelligent. And ought the welfare of such to be a matter of no solicitude?

and conduct, if they can recal the invectives which they have reciprocated, if, after this flagrant commission of themselves to the condemnation of the Oxford Tracts, and the publications of the Christian Knowledge Society, they can suspend their censures, and join as colleagues with those Bishops who sanction their circulation, they may for a while pace round the circle of their unnatural consentaneousness, they may cast the conflicting ingredients of their various doctrines into the caldron of the Establishment, but they never can concoct a charm which will entrammel reflecting people into a quiet submission to abuses which the confederates themselves have acknowledged.

"But even if the slenderest sort of conformity were all that we cared for, the course we pursue is very little adapted to secure it. What are the simple facts?—In the hearing of the people, the original defects of the national forms, and the abuses that have grown upon the Establishment, have lately been talked of with the utmost freedom. The people have listened, while men, the best informed, and the most moderate (not the enemies of the Church, but its friends) have confessed the necessity of revision—have implored attention to the great question from those who should first take it in hand. But all this discussion, all these entreaties come to nothing! Nothing may be hoped for. Pertinacity is to have its triumph—perilous triumph! It is a point of honour to spurn amendment. To change an iota, would be to acknowledge that the Fathers of the English Church were not inspired—were somewhat inferior to the Apostles. That which indeed is venerable and good in the national forms and modes (and it is much) must be put in peril for the sake of enforcing from the people an irrational homage to certain excrescences, which all men inwardly abhor! Such are the infatuations that controul human affairs!"—*Saturday Evening.*

By this insane course of procedure, the Evangelical Clergy are incurring a risk which their present political frenzy renders them incompetent to estimate; and they are casting away an opportunity of usefulness which perhaps they may never be able to recover. Thousands and thousands of individuals joined to the Church, and nominally members of her communion by early baptism, offended by the truculence of the Athanasian Creed, sorely perplexed by the enigmas of the Thirty-nine Articles, disgusted at the incessant refusals to amend the several services of the Liturgy, and incensed by the conjuration of the Clergy against all effectual reform, are looking round for pastoral leaders of tenets corresponding to their own. Great and trying are the dilemmas of conscientious men under such circumstances. To these Venn would have said, — Provide yourselves with a place of worship and a minister, as he counselled his parishioners on his retirement from Huddersfield, but they still cling to the formularies observed by their forefathers, and linger in the accustomed paths which ancient associations endear, but which conscience stimulates them to quit. Urged by this importunate impulse, and staggered by the callousness of those guides whom no warnings can persuade, and no remonstrance can soften, the prospect of separation from that section of the Church of which they are now reluctant members, becomes familiar, and at length will end in realization. This is one of the serious

consequences impending on the pertinacious refusal of Church Reform and the combination of the Clergy to resist it, which operates as a most active cause of irritation and secession. The disruption of long cherished habits of a hallowed character must of necessity be painful; but it is a consolation to those to whom this severance may become a matter of duty, that no guilt attaches to its conscientious adoption. The Christian is at liberty to cultivate the truths of the Gospel according to any mode, which his judgment may select; and while he regulates his faith and practice by the standard of the Scriptures, he requires no further rule, and needs not the dictation of fallible men. "Whatsoever is not deliveredthere may be true, but cannot be important." "*Hæc mea est sententia neque me ex ea, ullius unquam aut docti aut indocti, movebit oratio."

Asserting, however, this right of unfettered judgment, in a matter of the loftiest interest and ineffable importance, it would ill become him who advocates complete tolerance, to impose restraint on the opinions of others. But a demand of consistency, and the reprobation of secular virulence on the part of the ministers of the Established Church, are plainly reconcilable with the purest liberty of sentiment which an antagonist can claim. The absence of the former quality and the prevalence of

* Jortin's Ecclesiastical History.

the latter may create distrust, and even alienate the attachment of many from the Church, without exciting a desire for its destruction or spoliation. God forbid that I should raise an unhallowed hand or a reckless voice against the maintenance, properly regulated, of an Institution consecrated in the affections of millions of my countrymen and venerated far beyond the limits of its immediate sway. The Church of England, notwithstanding her defects, her divisions, and her arrogance, has rendered eminent service to Christianity, and is a noble bulwark of the truths of Revelation; but, that she may preserve her exalted station among the champions of those truths, it is no insult to exhort her Clergy to compose their differences, to consent to effective reform, to pursue that path of meekness which may restore them to the confidence of their hesitating followers, and to abandon for ever the coarse conflict of political acrimony.

THE END.

NORMAN AND SKEEN, PRINTERS, MAIDEN LANE, COVENT GARDEN.